

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GREEK REACTION TO PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S REMARKS
TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

REF: STATE 294514

1. DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS THE ATHENS PRESS HAS GIVEN
CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON CONCERNING
PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S COMMENTS BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON NOV 23 CONCERNING US RELATIONS
WITH GREECE AND TURKEY. MOST REPORTS FOCUSSED ON TWO OF
THE PRES-ELECT'S REMARKS THAT (A) THE BASES IN TURKEY
ARE IMPORTANT TO THE US AND (B) THE GREEK CELEBRATION OF
HIS ELECTION WAS UNWARRANTED IF IT ASSUMED A LACK OF
OBJECTIVITY ON MR CARTER'S PART (REFTEL). SOME NEWSPAPERS
GAVE COVERAGE TO THE STORY YESTERDAY AND ALL REPORTED IT
PROMINENTLY TODAY, TOGETHER WITH GENERALLY NEGATIVE EDITORIAL
COMMENT.

2. PRO-GOVT ACROPOLIS HEADLINED YESTERDAY "THE
TURKISH BASES ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR THE UNITED STATES -
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THE NEW PRESIDENT IS HESITANT" AND TODAY "OFFICIAL

ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED WITH REGARD TO THE RECENT STATEMENTS - CARTERS POLICY REMAINS UNCHANGED - MILITARY AGREEMENTS WITH GREECE AND TURKEY ONLY IF PROGRESS ON CYPRUS". LIBERAL, OPPOSITION TO VIMA QUOTED YESTERDAY, IN BANNER HEADLINES, "I BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR BASES IN TURKEY" AND "CARGER NOW STATES 'I BELIEVE THE GREEKS UNJUSTIFIABLY CELEBRATED MY VICTORY'". WHILE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR RIZOSPASTIS IGNORED THE STORY YESTERDAY, TODAY IT CAME ON STRONG WITH "AFTER THE BLUNT STATEMENT OF MR CARTER THE STRUCTURE OF PRO-AMERICANISM IS COLLAPSING: AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD GREECE REMAINS UNCHANGED: ONLY ONE WAY OUT, THE DISENGAGEMENT FROM AMERICAN DOMINATION".

3. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ATHENS NEWS AGENCY BULLETIN QUOTED "COMPETENT SOURCES" AS SAYING THE GREEK SIDE HAD NEITHER CELEBRATED NOR CLAIMED THAT ALL THE PROBLEMS HAD BEEN SOLVED (BY CARTER'S VICTORY). ON THE CONTRARY, THE SOURCES CONTINUED, THE GOVERNMENT OPPOSED ALL EXAGGERTAIONAND DECLINED COMMENT EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER MR CARTERS ELECTION, AND THE GOVT CHOSE TO DISPLAY A SENSE OF MEASURE IN ASSESSING THE SITUATION IN ITS TRUE DIMENSIONS.

4. FOR HIS PART, PASOK CHIEFTAIN ANDREAS PAPANDREOU STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE REGRETTEED THAT HIS PREDICTIONS ABOUT AMERICAN POLICY HAD ONCE AGAIN COME TRUE (IE, THAT CARTERS ELECTIN DID NOT FORECAST A CHANGE IN US POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ISSUES OF CONCERN TO GREECE). PAPANDREOU COMMENTED THAT IT WAS FORTUNATE IT HAD HAPPENED SO QUICKLY BECAUSE THE GOVT HAD TIME TO ADAPT ITS POLICY TO THE SITUATION, PROVIDED IT COULD AND WISHED TO DO SO. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR ALSO ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT CLAIMING THE PRES-ELECT'S REMARKS REVEALED THAT US POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED AND CALLING UPON THE GOG TO ADOPT POLICIES WHICH DEFEND GREECE'S INDEPENDENCE.

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